



BRANCH 193

Bulletin

Campbell ♦ Gilroy ♦ Los Gatos ♦ Milpitas ♦ Morgan Hill ♦ San Jose ♦ Saratoga

Messages from the President

No. 4 - 09 August - September 2009

Danny Laffan

Let me start by addressing “the elephant in the room”. As you can see by the notice posted on this page, I am planning to retire from the position of President of Branch 193 at the end of this year. After much consideration and discussion with my family I feel that the time has come for me to leave the daily grind behind. My wife Lucy and I have a combined total of over seventy-seven years of service to the Postal Service and NALC. We feel the time has arrived to move on with our lives and enjoy spending time together and with our four grandchildren. I appreciate the kind words of support and encouragement that I have received from many carriers as I visit the stations. You are the main source of the strength that I have needed to continue in a leadership role for Branch 193 during these difficult times. I have reached a point in my life where the years behind me far exceeded the years ahead of me. Spending quality time with my wife, children and grandchildren has become more of a priority as each

year passes. I am now at a place in time that I feel I need to make some of the dreams Lucy and I have shared over the last four decades become a reality. I am very confident that Vice President Laurie Duarte will continue the tradition of strong leadership with a focus on quality representation that the membership of Branch 193 has enjoyed in the past. I will remain available to Laurie and the membership of Branch 193 in whatever capacity deemed appropriate to ensure a smooth transition of leadership. Once again, thank you for the support and encouragement you have given me through the years I truly appreciate it.

Route Adjustments

The parties at the national level have renewed their commitment to work
continued on page 2

OFFICERS

- Danny LaffanPresident
- Laurie Duarte.....Vice President
- Bill Cunningham.....Second Vice President
- Pat Mulligan.....Recording Secretary
- Sharon Epp.....Financial Secretary
- Stanley HalfacreTreasurer
- Guillermo Martinez.....Sgt at Arms
- Jackie Lanto.....HBP/MBA Rep
- Laurie Lykam-Halfacre.....Trustee
- Jim Miller.....Trustee
- Joe RosaTrustee
- Kelvin Kamachi.....Trustee
- Lin Zhou.....Trustee
- Guillermo Martinez.....Legislative Liaison
- Steven Munyon.....Editor Scribe

Branch 193 Bulletin

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The Branch 193 Bulletin is published by Branch 193, National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO. Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Branch 193. We invite all members to contribute articles for publication. The Editor retains the right to edit, delete, or reject any article for the good of the Branch.

Notice of Vacancy in Office

Notice of a vacancy in the office of Vice President Branch 193 due to the anticipated retirement of the President of Branch 193 in December 2009 is hereby given to the membership. Nominations to fill this mid term vacancy will be held at the October 14, 2009 Regular Branch Meeting. Candidates must accept nomination at the meeting, or if absent, in writing. An election (if necessary) to fill the position will be held in conjunction with the National Convention Delegate Election. Ballots will be mailed out in November with results announced at the December 9, 2009 meeting.

Notice of Convention Delegate Election

This is the official notification to all members of Branch 193 that nominations for the position of Delegate to the 2010 National Convention in Anaheim, CA during the week of August 9 – 13, 2010 will be held at the October 14, 2009 Regular Branch Meeting. Candidates must accept the nomination at the meeting, or if absent, in writing. The election will be conducted by secret ballot. As per Branch by-laws, the ballots will be mailed to all members at least 20 days before the election. The election will be on Wednesday, December 9, 2009. The deadline for submission of ballots is 4PM, December 9, 2009. Results of the election will be announced at the December 9, 2009 meeting.

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www.nalcbranch193.com

together to keep routes adjust as closed to eight hours as possible. Declining mail volume has created a need to become more vigilant regarding maintaining eight hours of work on each assignment. The agreement entered into at the national level calls for routes to be reviewed and adjusted twice before the end of this year. While that may seem aggressive, I believe the intention is to keep abreast with the changes as they occur. It is my hope that the local contact people and the district coordinators will provide carriers with the information they need to best understand the changes that occur and the reasons why the changes are needed. Most routes will be adjusted or have implementation dates around August 31st. Management will then gather more information on the routes after the adjustments take effect. A second adjustment is planned using the regular carriers actual time used on the route during the month of either September or October. It is critical that you make sure that your clock rings accurately reflect the time it takes you to complete your assignment. Skipping breaks and lunches will count against you more than ever before so if you are skipping breaks or lunches that behavior needs to stop immediately if you want a fair assessment of your daily workload. You are entitled to two ten-minute breaks and a thirty-minute lunch. You are paid during break times but you are not paid during lunch. If you work through your lunch you are working off the clock. The principle that we operate under is a fair days work for a fair days pay. It is critical that you understand that concept. Come to work with a good attitude, do the best you can, take pride in your work. Understand the importance of accurately documenting the time necessary for you to prepare the mail for delivery and the delivery of the mail everyday. Ensure your clock rings accurately reflect that time and you will be doing

everything you can to ensure the proper adjustment of your route. If you have any questions regarding the route adjustment process, please contact your shop steward. They will either provide you the answer or call the district coordinators to get the information you are requesting.

Five Day Delivery

This concept continues to be an ongoing issue for the Postal Service. It important to understand that the Postal Service has a monopoly on first class mail because we have committed to provide universal service (every address in this country) six days a week. The powers that be in the Postal Service understand that in order to maintain our monopoly on first class mail while only delivering five days a week that Congress must agree to approve that change. I do not believe that the leadership of the Postal Service would ever risk losing the monopoly on first class mail. That would be a disaster from which we would never recover. The difficult economic times we are experiencing have brought many challenges to the organization. It is important to understand that something has to be done to address these challenges. Leadership requires vision and I believe that the leadership of the Postal Service is being very short sighted when the default to cutting the one product we have (service) as the first alternative to addressing these issues. This Union is working diligently with members of Congress to craft a solution to those challenges that would provide the Postal Service the relief necessary to survive these difficult times. There are two bills in Congress that once signed into law would allow our employer to use funds that are being set aside to fund future retirees health benefits to offset the current losses. I believe that is a much better reasoned approach to solving our problems. Keep abreast of this important issue by joining the

eActivist program and by visiting the nalc.org or nalcbranch193.com websites.

National Reassessment Program (NRP)

We have been notified that the Bay Valley District has moved into Phase 2 of the NPR. This means that personnel from the area and district have currently identifying all necessary work available for limited duty carriers and will be matching that work with the current limited duty job offer. Once this task is completed, interviews with affected limited duty carriers will be scheduled to discuss the current bids and any changes that may be necessary. We have been told that will be notified of these interviews two weeks in advance and as I write this article in early August no such notification has been received. We have been told that it is expected that the interviews will take place by the end of the current fiscal year (mid-September). Carriers are allowed Union representation during this interview, if requested. If you are scheduled for an interview under the NRP be sure to request a Union representative be present. It is important to ensure that work provided under the provisions of Section 546 of the ELM remains available to limited duty carriers. Limited Duty offers should have as much carrier work as possible within the limitations. Other craft work may be assigned under 546 ELM and if it has be assigned under those provisions and remains available it should continue as part to of the limited duty offer. This program involves a process to determine if work is available for limited duty carriers. It involves a series of interviews designed to provide work within limitations imposed by the treating physician. We will share more information as it becomes available to us.

Family Picnic

This year's Branch 193 Family Picnic will be held on Sunday September 13th. The event will be held at Coyote Ranch, which is located in South San Jose off Metcalf Roas. Flyers and tickets are available from your Shop Steward. Get your tickets now and avoid the rush. Coyote Ranch offers a variety of games and entertainment for your enjoyment. The feedback from last year's event was very positive and we look forward to a good time being had by all who attend. The park opens at 10:30 and a tri-tip and chicken lunch with all the fixings will be served from 11:45 to 1:00 PM. Tickets are \$17 for adults (12 and over) and \$10 for children (ages 4-11) Children age 3 and below are free. Come early and enjoy the day.

Welcome President Rolando

On July 4th Fred Rolando became the 18th National President of the NALC. I would like to congratulate President Rolando and wish him much success as he assumes the reigns of leadership for this great Union. I am confident that he will lead us through the difficult times we are facing and that he will ensure that we continue to be a large part of the solution to the problems the Postal Service faces in these tough economic times. Welcome President Rolando.

NALC Health Benefits

It's Hard to believe that it's already July. Time has gone by so fast since the end of Open Season 2008, and I know the next few months are going to go by even faster. On that note, What an Open Season! The total enrollment gain was 26,080. This is the largest growth the plan has ever seen. As per OPM's rating the NALC Health Benefit Plan was again rated at the top for customer service for fee-for-service plans. With excellent service, terrific benefits and low premiums, the NALC HBP is an outstanding health plan for letter carriers, and their families. The NALC is committed to keep this plan affordable and with the highest service.

Here are some Important numbers to keep for reference;

PPO Network Providers/Cigna HealthCare.....1-877-220-6252

(To confirm your provider's participation or to locate a hospital)

Pre-Certify a Hospital Admission.....1-877-220-6265

(Prior to your medical hospitalization, pre-certify to avoid a penalty)

24-Hour Nurse Help Line.....1-877-220-6265

(To speak with a registered nurse regarding medical needs)

Prescription Services / CVS / CareMark.....1-800-933-6265

(To locate network retail pharmacies, request mail order refills, or to check the status of an order)

Please Note: Open Season dates for 2009 are tentatively scheduled for November 9 - December 7, 2009

Newest Members of the Million Mile Club

On Friday June 12th the Postal Service recognized eleven Branch 193 members and Driver Instructor Bob Neitro as the newest members of the National Safety Council's Million Mile Club. These members have driven postal vehicles for over thirty years without an "at fault" accident. They have demonstrated a commitment to their safety and the safety of those around them as they went about the delivery of the mail. Paying attention to your surroundings and focusing on safety were the main reasons given for their success. Congratulations to all who received this award. We are proud of you.

- Danny Laffan, Branch 193 President



Top Row: Danny Laffan Branch 193 President, Mel Taira, Ben Navarrete, Bonafacio Yabut & Roger Hanson Bottom Row: Sammy Vasquez Postmaster San Jose, Mike Francisco, Joe Rosa, Joe Lozano. Award winners not a ceremony Glen Nakamatsu, Patricia Packer, Henry Kung, and Michael Hughes



Former Branch 193 member and current Bay valley Drivers Safety Instruction Bob Neitro receives his award

Free Parking See your shop steward for more details

Submitted: Guillermo Martinez

In mid June, H.R. 1256 Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act was enacted into public law. HR 1256 was passed to guard public health by furnishing the Food and Drug Administration with the necessary authority to govern tobacco products. Before this bill was to be signed by the president, Senator Joseph Lieberman (I. CT) attempted to include the sick leave credit attachment but his draft was excluded when Senator Jim DeMint (R. SC) opposed. According to Senate rules, any amendments need to be agreed to with full consent. Employees under the FERS would be provided with the same benefit for unused sick leave provided to employees under the older civil service retirement system. At their retirement employees receive credit for unused sick leave. Rather than object, leaders in the house decided to allow the tobacco bill to pass without the sick leave credit attachment. On June 23, Congress introduced H.R. 2990 Disabled Military Retiree Relief Act, in this bill there is an attachment to deposit refunds under the FERS retirement system that would allow those employees who retire the same sick leave credit as CSRS employees. Some thrift saving plan changes were attached to H.R. 1256 where newly hired career employees will be automatically enrolled in TSP and the employees contribution level will be

between two to five percent. The postal service is mandated to start matching contributions for new employees immediately. Participants may choose to make deposits to a qualified ROTH contribution plan. These contributions are taxed at deposit and tax free at the time withdrawal. The existing rule is that contributions are pre-taxed and earnings are taxed when withdrawn. The Thrift Savings Plan Board has been given authority to form a mutual fund window, if in the best interest of the participants. This would allow employees to invest in mutual funds that are available commercially. Before any decision is made, the board will consult the Employee Thrift Advisory Council, where the N.A.L.C. is currently Chair.

H.R. 1256 is an example of apathy can be the deciding factor. Only two percent of the branch's membership contributes to COLCPE. To be successful in legislation, the N.A.L.C. needs the influence and the funds to educate politicians. The first step in realizing that legislation and its developments effects carriers from our hire date until retirement and beyond is to understand that Congress controls our issues. Contribute to COLCPE, and become a part of the Union's grassroots efforts in which invest in your family, your job, your future, and your retirement.

Family Picnic

Fun, Fun, Fun

Come join the fun on September 13.

Coyote Ranch

The fun starts at

10:30 am till 4 :00pm

BBQ Tri-Tip, Chicken, Drumstick/
Hot Dog for the Children. BEER, Wine,
Soda Provided TUG-OF-WAR,
Water Balloon Toss Three-Legged Race,
and much, much more.

Come join the fun

Adults- **\$17.00**

Children- **\$10.00**

Free Parking

*See your shop steward for
more details*



A Good Day Fishing — Cooper, Connor, Caeden and Matthew display their catch after a morning of fishing on Hat Creek.

Branch 193 Shop Stewards

Almaden Valley	Dan Degn & Pam West
Bayside	Al Navarette & Ernie Arrañaga
Berryessa	Henry Semillano & Lawrence Wenceslao
Blossom Hill	Steve Miller & Tom Cerna
Cambrian Park.....	Ray Gauthier & David Martinez
Campbell	Rosie La'auli & Vacant
Station D	Vittorio Forde
Foothill.....	Art Parrilla
Gilroy	Debra Masten
Hillview.....	Manny Aguilar & Victor Barrientos
Los Gatos	Kevin Janton
Los Gatos Dell	Ian Davies
Milpitas	Joel Baclig & Raj Kanda
Morgan Hill.....	Angel Montelongo
Parkmoor.....	David Judd & Sean McArthur
Robertsville	Theresa Hernandez & Al Denison
St. James Park	Chris North & Laurie Duarte
Saratoga.....	Robert Vanderpool
Seven Trees	Moe Bedolla & Ronnie Hodges
Westgate	Tommy Rivera & Vince Ramirez
Willow Glen.....	Bob Krauth & Jack Dusthimer
Collection Officer.....	Vera Martinez-Krauth

Important Dates

Aug..12	Branch Meeting
Aug 26	Executive Board Meeting
Sept 7th	Labor Day
Sept 9	Branch Meeting
Sept 13	Family Picnic
Sept 30	Executive Board Meeting
Oct 12.....	Columbus Day Holiday
Oct 14.....	Branch Meeting
Oct 28	Executive Board Meeting

Branch Meetings begin promptly at **7:00 PM**:

Italian American Heritage Foundation

425 North 4th Street
San Jose, CA 95112

Board Meetings begin promptly at **7:00 PM**:

Union Office

1060 Minnesota Avenue, Suite 9
San Jose, CA 95125

Did you know that;

In the M-41; section 321.3 it says “Flats are to be placed in the satchel, not on your arm. The section states, “peel off the letters and circulars for the first house from the bundle standing on the end in the satchel.” A 1982 arbitration decision states that it is not a requirement for a carrier on a foot route to carry four inches of flats on his arm while delivering mail. Carrying flats on your arm is a safety hazard. If you are involved in an accident, management could attribute it to the fact that you were holding flats on your arm. It may take you a little longer to do the job safely, but it takes a lot longer to heal broken bones and injured backs.”

In Memoriam

Deepest Sympathy to the Families & Friends of our departed brother.

Bobby Mills

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW RETIREES

Randy Castro.....	St. James Park
Michael Herrera.....	Hillview
Romulo Santos	Saratoga
Pete Sulaver	Willow Glen
Nancy Brady	St. James Park
Armando Bulaong	Campbell
Mary Calderon	Hillview
Juanito Calibo Jr	St. James Park
Estrella Valdez	Hillview
Romeo Valdez	Parkmoor
John Nabarette	Los Gatos
Jerry Navarro.....	Bayside

JACKPOT

Lewis Lopez from Morgan Hill Station, did not attend the **June** Branch Meeting and was unavailable to correct the **\$363.00** Jackpot. **Jasbir Saggi** from Foothill Station DID attend the **July** meeting, and **WON \$415.00**. Congratulations Jasbir. Attend the August meeting, and you could be next.

Deadline

The Deadline for the next issue of the Branch 193 Bulletin is Wednesday September 30, 2009. News stories, articles, letters to the editor, drawings, cartoons, business cards, and/or photographs should be submitted to:

Editor • Branch 193 Bulletin • P.O. Box 5721 • San Jose, CA 95150